

In November, 2009 the Cumberland Town Council adopted a new comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan is a long-range plan that looks at current data relating to demographics, land use, housing, public facilities, infrastructure, transportation, and other areas. The State encourages plans to be updated at least every 10 years. Cumberland's previous plan was 11 years old and much had changed in the community during those 11 years. The commonly-held view that Cumberland must protect its "rural character" at all costs by discouraging residential growth and opposing commercial growth was no longer "commonly-held". Instead, residents expressed concerns about rising taxes and the difficulty of supporting quality schools and municipal government using primarily residential tax revenue. The Town Council directed town staff to explore ways to widen the tax base by reaching out to new and existing businesses. The Cumberland Maine Business Association (CMBA) was created and for the first time the town government began actively promoting business growth. However there was still a reluctance to encourage residential growth for fear of the increased costs to provide town services to new residents, especially in the area of education. To challenge that assumption, the 2009 Comp Plan Committee engaged Charles Lawton, a highly regarded economist in the region, to conduct a "Fiscal Impact of Residential Growth" study. The results showed that contrary to popular belief, the Town would benefit from the tax revenue created by new housing, and more importantly, that the influx of new students into the school system would create an economic gain, not cost to the Town.

The 2009 plan called for supporting business and residential growth in the designated "growth areas" of town (Rt. 1, Rt. 100 and the town center). It especially encouraged sustainable development that would provide affordable housing, small scale retail and restaurant uses, alternative transportation options and protection of open space and agricultural land.

The implementation of the 2009 plan was very successful. In less than four years, all but 9 of the 239 action items called for in the plan were accomplished. Where once Cumberland was considered to be an exclusive bedroom community with a lack of diversity in its population and housing, it now boasts 49 new units of affordable rental housing and 34 new single family homes priced below \$225,000. ____ new businesses have opened their doors since 2009 and the town's tax base has grown from \$_____ in 2009 to \$_____ in _____ and went from a tax base that was 98% residential to ____ % residential. In _____ the Town received the honor of being designated as a "Business Friendly" community by the State. In addition to providing new revenue, the creation of new housing units, small scale restaurants and retail shops have enabled residents to procure basic goods and services locally, instead of traveling to neighboring towns

So why update the 2009 plan at this time? Simply put, to make sure the current plan remains significant and relevant. Planning is a dynamic process. The Town Council continues to be presented with new opportunities to enhance the community by making the best use of its resources. An example of this is the decision by the Town Council to enter into two separate contract zoning agreements for the construction of 34 single family, affordable homes on Route 100. While the area had been zoned for commercial use, it became clear that there was virtually no demand for commercial development in this area due to its proximity to Falmouth and Gray and the small population in West Cumberland. A business park approved in 2007 remained undeveloped 6 years later. The Council made the decision to "grow" the population in order to support new and existing businesses and so the proposed contract zones were approved. During the debate over the proposed contract zones, the Council was asked to consider changing the Rural Residential 1 district (4 acre minimum lot size) to Rural Residential 2 (2 acres minimum lot size) so that there was equity among neighboring properties. The Council was reluctant to do that without a more comprehensive

review of the situation and the reasons why the difference was established. The Council appointed a committee of 8 residents to look at the areas of the plan relating to land use, housing and public facilities. Given that the 2009 Plan was based on census data that was nearly a decade old, the decision to amend the 2009 plan at this time allows this and future plans to utilize current decennial census data.

Given the limited scope of the plan review and the desire for the Council to respond in a timely manner to the Rural Residential question, the Council asked that the Committee provide its recommendations by mid-November. The Committee first met on May 16th and met on a monthly or bi-monthly basis since then. All meetings were advertised and open to the public. Several members of the public attended many of the meetings, sat at the table with the Committee and provided insight into the issues being considered. The Committee presented its draft recommendations at a televised public presentation on November 14th. There will be additional public hearings with the Planning Board and the Town Council over the next month. Please visit our website and click on the link for Comp Plan Update to find all information relating to this Committee's work.

	Font Color Key
Red	Proposed New Language (for 2014 Updated Plan)
Black	Existing Language (in current 2009 Plan)
Green	Completed Actions from 2009 Plan
Blue	Proposed Language to be deleted (from 2009 Plan)

HOUSING CHAPTER

GOAL:

Continue to encourage the development of housing which provides for a mix of people from all income strata, ages, trades and professions.

Proposed New Actions:

- Work with potential developers to create rental housing for young people (ages 20-30) so that they have an affordable and flexible option for housing should they wish to live in Cumberland following high school or college.
- Consider establishing an Affordable Housing Overlay Zone in West Cumberland near the Industrial District. This would allow for greater density thereby reducing the cost per unit of new housing.
- Continue to work with potential developers for the construction of Phase 2 of the Village Green Revitalization plan. This phase could include rental housing to fit the needs of the growing number of single resident households. Studio (efficiencies) and one bedroom units located above ground floor retail or office space would be desirable.
- Continue to expand options for the creation of accessory dwelling units. These units could be created within larger single family homes or in detached structures on a parcel with an existing house located on it.
- Consider ways to support the development of a continuum of care facility.

2009 Comprehensive Plan Housing Actions (to remain in the plan):

- Consider providing incentives to developers who create a portion of the lots for buyers who meet affordable income guidelines.
- Provide incentives for the construction of smaller, single family homes.

2009 Completed Actions:

- ~~1. Exempt homes under 1500 sq. ft. from the Growth Management and Impact Fee Ordinances.~~
- ~~2. Develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the build out of the Doane property that would include construction of affordable housing units for all age groups and income levels. Explore feasibility of creating units for handicapped residents. Include both ownership and rental units.~~

LAND USE CHAPTER

Proposed New Goals and Actions:

GOAL: Work to create local land use regulations that do not unnecessarily increase the cost of new, affordable housing.

Actions:

- Consider revising the two rural residential zones. Delete the RR 1 zone which requires a 4 acre minimum lot size and also delete the RR 2 zoning district. Replace these two zones with one zone “Rural Residential” that requires a two acre minimum lot size.
- Reduce the cost for connecting into public water and sewer where available.

GOAL: Consider allowing additional uses to the Route 1 commercial districts to allow for support services for employees of the businesses located there, as well as for the entire community to utilize.

Action:

- Consider adding Retail (limited to 3500 s.f.) and Restaurants (limited to 3500 s.f.). Ensure that all new development conforms to the Route 1 Design Guidelines and standards for hours of operation, number of seat, parking, lighting and signage.

GOAL: Continue to work to create opportunities for the development of affordable housing.

- Action: Consider establishing an Affordable Housing Overlay Zone in West Cumberland

Goal: Consider ways to provide affordable public transportation

- Action: Explore opportunities for bus service between and among surrounding communities so that residents of all ages are able to travel around the area without the need for a private vehicle.

2009 Comprehensive Plan Goals and Actions (TO REMAIN IN PLAN):

GOAL: To connect the major roads in town to conserve fuel and allow for more efficient and convenient vehicle, bike and pedestrian travel.

ACTION: Inventory potential connections between the following roads:

- Greely and Tuttle
- Tuttle and lower Rt. 9 (via Harris Rd.)
- ~~Tuttle and upper Rt. 9 (via the former Doane parcel)~~ (Complete)
- Greely Road Extension and Pleasant Valley Road.

GOAL :

Work towards creating a more “livable” community.

ACTIONS:

1. Strive to create a mix of homes, jobs, services and amenities in areas with proximity to town services.
2. Encourage diversity within the community by adopting affordable housing zoning provisions.
3. Encourage/allow for a variety of housing types to meet the needs of single residents, young families and seniors so that the ability to stay in the community for a lifetime is possible for all income levels.
4. Have pedestrian/bike friendly connections within densely developed residential areas and within commercial areas. Connect the two whenever possible.
5. Facilitate the development of mixed use projects.
6. Maintain existing trail systems with the town and where possible, connect trails.

GOAL: Reduce dependence on cars and encourage safe, non-vehicular transportation for all age groups.

ACTIONS:

1. Interconnect new subdivisions with existing ones or leave connections to undeveloped sites.
2. Work to link existing trails by strengthening ordinance language. Delete reference to Greenbelt Map, instead state “any observable trail shall be preserved in its existing location or relocated on the site in such a way as to preserve the existing trail connection.”
3. Develop bike/pedestrian ways along all major roads so that residents are able to get to the town center, major recreational areas, commercial areas and jobs.

Note: The following goals and actions have been completed.

GOAL 6:

~~Encourage non-residential development in commercial and industrial zones to diversify the tax base.~~

ACTIONS:

- ~~1. Establish a mixed use zone on the town owned land at the end of Drowne Road.~~
- ~~2. Create a simplified process for small projects that require site plan review.~~
- ~~3. Consider having a staff review process for small projects or changes to existing plans.~~

GOAL 7:

~~Simplify the site plan review process so that small projects may be processed with a minimum amount of time and cost to the applicant.~~

ACTIONS:

- ~~1. Develop procedure for staff review of small projects.~~
- ~~2. Develop a reduced list of submission requirements rather than create a need for waivers to be granted by Planning Board for unnecessary materials.~~

NOTE: The following goals and actions are proposed to be removed from the plan. Reason: The town currently has provision for cluster subdivisions which require sensitive natural areas and prime farmland be preserved as open space areas. There are certain types of parcel configurations that do not lend themselves to a cluster design which requires an internal road system, therefor retention of the traditional design is proposed.

~~GOAL: Require that future subdivisions be designed so as to preserve or protect agricultural use, environmentally sensitive land, and scenic areas while clustering homes in areas of least visibility from the roadways.~~

ACTIONS:

- ~~1. Adopt a Conservation Subdivision Ordinance to protect the above types of land and to site homes in areas of least visibility from roadways.~~
- ~~2. Eliminate Traditional Subdivision option from current ordinance.~~

~~GOAL: To encourage the preservation of land that is suitable for agricultural use.~~

~~ACTION: Create a Farmland Overlay for lots greater than 10 acres or on which the current use is agricultural. This overlay will then require that any subdivision developments within the area conform to the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance.~~

PUBLIC FACILITIES CHAPTER

Proposed New Goals and Actions:

GOAL:

Ensure that all town roads are brought up to acceptable standards and then maintained in good condition to reduce the need for expensive rebuilding of roads.

ACTIONS:

1. Continue implementation of the paving plan schedule through annual funding as called for in the Capital Improvement Plan.
2. Continue to partner with the Maine Department of Transportation to acquire state funds to assist with State-owned road projects.
3. Continue to work with PACTS (Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System) to secure available federal transportation money to assist with town projects.

GOAL :

Continue to work with providers of natural gas so that gas is available to as many areas of town as possible.

ACTIONS:

1. Continue and build an aggressive education program for natural gas connections.
2. Develop long range plans to reach all Cumberland residents.
3. Set aside annually monies from revenues collected from gas main infrastructure to assist in home energy audits for residents not receiving natural gas services.
4. Continue to work with the Energy Advisory Committee to find alternative ways to achieve energy savings through all alternative sources of fuels.

GOAL:

Consider expansion of the public water and sewer system so that environmentally sensitive areas are protected; to stimulate or provide for economic development; and to provide safe drinking water to areas that have had water quality problems in the past.

ACTIONS:

1. Expand public water along Blackstrap Road and along Route 100 north to the Gray town line.
2. Continue expansion of public water in West Cumberland. Extend water from its current terminus at the West Cumberland Fire Station across turnpike, to the Upper Methodist Road and Goose Pond Road.
3. Extend water to the Corey Road Business Park from its current terminus at Winn Rd/Rt.9 and Rt. 9/Wyman Way.
4. Extend water along Middle road from Tuttle to Falmouth town line.
5. Extend water in the upper Bruce Hill and Pleasant Valley roads area.
6. Consider funding to assist residents in separating foundation drains and sump pumps from the sewer system.

2009 Comprehensive Plan Public Facility Goals and Actions (TO REMAIN IN PLACE):

GOAL: Continue to provide high quality municipal services to town residents in the most cost efficient way.

ACTION:

Continue to explore further opportunities for regional consolidation of services.

GOAL: To provide community facilities sufficient to meet the needs of the town government and its citizens. Examples include town buildings, Val Halla Golf and Recreation Center, Twin Brook Recreation Center, the Rines Forest, and the schools.

ACTIONS:

1. Explore opportunities for oceanfront access.
2. Consider assisting in the development of a community center for use by all age groups in the town.
3. Consider expanding Community Education opportunities to senior residents.

GOAL: Encourage higher density development to areas which are served by public water and sewer.

ACTION:

Consider providing a density bonus for developments that agree to extend or connect to public water and/or sewer.

GOAL: Manage growth so that public services can be effectively and efficiently provided.

ACTIONS:

1. Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the Growth and Impact Fee Ordinance.
2. Recommend to the Town Council that new subdivision roads not be accepted as public roads.